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ABSTRACT

Balancing the vocational and educational components in technical institutions today is difficult, requiring that faculty and administrators have vision, political realism, moral integrity, and energy. To understand better the rationale which underlies present forms of nonuniversity, postsecondary college education, a study was conducted at three college communities in the United Kingdom (U.K.), Canada, and the United States. In all three communities, the colleges examined were closely allied with the manufacturing sector. Faculty, students, and administrators were interviewed in 1987 on a non-random qualitiative basis, to establish thematic trends. The majority of students in all three countries identified with the values of the occupations that they would eventually enter. The greatest difference between the three groups of students was in the type of employment preferred (i.e., the U.K. students showed a preference for large organizations, while the Americans, and a sizable minority of Canadian students, showed a preference for small companies or for employment as entrepreneurs). Faculty in all three colleges experienced conflict attempting to educate in a flexible manner for a changing world while at the same time socializing students to accept future allocated work roles. In all three countries, administrators saw their task as providing an educational climate in which students could develop as people and citizens and acquire specific work skills, but administrators seemed insufficiently aware of the role conflicts which faculty faced. The main difference in the responses of chief executive officers was a greater vocational emphasis among U.K. and Canadian respondents. However, in all three countries, the general education component of vocational training was under attack except where it specifically appeared to contribute to the socialization of future employees. (38 endnotes) (JMC)

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VOCATIONAL TRAINING

OR

VALUE SHAPING

ONE APPROACH TO EDUCATION IN THE 1990'S

BY

STEPHEN JACKSON

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This study was undertaken in order to understand better the underlying rationale which determines present forms of non-university, post-secondary college education. The study examines three college communities, in the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States of America. I would suggest that many of the ambiguities and tensions found in the colleges examined, relate not so much to their internal climate, or particular forms of management, but to the external environment within which the colleges provide an educational service.

Further, what I shall term Cognitive Dissonance in the face of mutually exclusive competing demands all too often prevents clear evaluation of difficult choices. This useful concept developed by Festinger arises when our behaviours and values come into conflict. To avoid conflict we change our values or our behaviours. Usually we change our attitudes or our expectations. This paper will suggest that our inherent belief in our academic role to seek out truth may prevent us from realizing how much the external environment determines our behaviour. In attempting to reconcile the needs of the student, the society, and the future employer, the conflict is frequently so ferocious that our judgement becomes clouded. To become aware of these dilemmas is a first step in coping more appropriately with this dilemma.

Since I began college teaching in 1967, I have observed a variety of changes. The most obvious change is a decline in the emphasis on "technical" education offset by an expansion of education in preparation for the "service" sector of the Canadian economy, reflecting changes in the requirements of the Canadian labour market.

The labour force in Canada employed in manufacturing and construction fell from 31% in 1960 to 23% in 1985, while employment in trade, finance and services rose from 41% of the labour force in 1960 to 55% in 1987. [1] This changing pattern of employment in Canada is similar to that found in nearly all western industrialized countries, reflecting the decreasing labour intensity of work in the manufacturing and construction sector, accompanied by increased investment in mechanized methods of production, providing a substitute for human labour.

This change in the external economic environment has led to shifts in curriculum emphasis in the colleges. A greater emphasis has been placed upon programmes which prepare students for new service areas of the economy, and considerable expansion has occurred in the general education component of all students' curriculum. The emphasis upon communication skills, mathematics and courses directed at acquiring knowledge of the work place as a whole, as opposed to socialization in a particular occupational role, have developed in order that students may be prepared to compete

in a changing labour market. A recent report of the Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology suggesting that a possible mandate which commenced with the following words:

> Education has an essential role to play in the development of a world which is peaceful, environmentally sound, equitable and economically viable. Education should help to balance individual and community needs, and foster personnal initiative and cooperation within human relationships based on mutual respect. [2]

In the college where I teach, despite considerable administrative explanation of the need for curriculum evolution, this development has not taken place without some tension and unhappiness. Areas in decline have alternated between self blame, and accusations of unfair diversion of resources toward those areas in a state of growth. This anger and lowering of morale associated with decrease in the rate of educational funding expansion, has led, at times in the recent past, to a tense and uneven process of change. Blame for discomfort, on the part of students and faculty, has often been directed at individual administrators, or the provincial Ministry of Colleges and Universities. Perhaps the forces which led to these changes were in the main, embedded in the changing structure of Canadian society, which was evolving in a similar way to many other democratic mixed economy capitalist democracies, namely a declining manufacturing sector in relation to the service component of their economies.

It, therefore, would seem advantageous for institutions to develop some theoretical understanding of the process of change which is occurring, in order that a more logical evolution may take place, rather than piecemeal reactions to the most recent, current areas of greatest pressure. Will the institutions develop a challenging curriculum and ethos, which, whilst preparing the students for an occupational role, educate them in ways in which the student is enabled to analyze the work environment, make informed choices, and play a part as an educated member of a democratic society? The Vision 2000 Report alluded to earlier suggested:

> As public educational institutions, the colleges have an obligation to provide a high standard of education which offers students more than narrow job-specific skills. A college education should be developmental in that it should provide a strong foundation for the student to continue learning. There is a qualitative difference between learning a technology and learning how to operate a particular machine. Learning only the latter can several limit employment because the skills required in many occupations are changing rapidly. Developing students' abilities to analyze and apply knowledge, and providing them with skills that are generic rather than exclusively job-specific, will help them adapt to change. [3]

In order for the latter form of education to take place, educators must first gain a much broader understanding of the issues in society which affect the environments in which they function.

What is the relevance of college offerings to the service economies which are beginning to develop as a

substitute for jobs in industry?

Do colleges face up to the potentiality for cognitive dissonance in the frequent incongruities in the roles we must play? The potential for tension and psychological pain in what we are asked to achieve, I suggest, may inhibit a clear detached examination of the tasks facing us. In order to examine this notion, which I have called the cognitive dissonance of mutually exclusive competing demands, I interviewed college administrators, faculty and students within business programs in three colleges in the spring and summer of 1987. One college, each, was located in the USA, Canada and Britain.

Colleges in the past have, in Canada and Britain, and I think, the United States, have given their courses a strong vocational flavour in response to these institution's perception of the requirements of the industrial environment. Whilst this relationship has, in all three countries, always been more ideological than precise, it would seem that Gleeson's comment on British further education might, to some degree, apply to the three countries being considered. "Further education would seem to be less concerned with integrating real training with real jobs and more to do with mediating the gap which now exists between school and work." [4]

Students frequently seem to adopt a highly instrumental attitude to college education. They sense, that in order to

obtain a more desirable occupation in the labour market, the credentials provided by a college education will allow them to compete for a higher position in the occupational hierarchy. The careers available to many qualifying, in middle skill service occupations are frequently less well paid, than those in the industrial sector. What implications for student acceptance of college offerings does this dissonance between the student's hope for a challenging well paid career, and the reality, which a student experiences when the occupations open to them, and the financial rewards to be expected become apparent?

Lander, discussing the role of Business Education Council Accredited courses in Britain, where there is considerable youth unemployment, suggests:

> One result of the growing number of unemployed youth may well be that more students will attend courses...as an alternative to the dole. This education may well in fact be not so much a training for a subsequent occupation, it rather may be used as a method of regulating the growing queue of young, unemployed people awaiting entry into a contracting labour market. [8]

The late Barbara Wootton, a leading British Social Scientist writing in 1964, forecasting the world in twenty years suggested:

> Social changes are commonly induced by new technical development but, revolutions apart, they proceed at a much more sober pace... The passport to any kind of superior position will be the right to append certain letters to your name; and the opportunity to acquire such paper qualifications

> will certainly be more evenly spread than today... but whatever the form that this takes, it will be even more frankly and unashamedly a matter of certificate collection. [5]

The extent to which, if at all, colleges have reacted to the technical and cultural changes which have affected the nature of work in mixed economy capitalist democracies will be examined.

The study explored the reactions and perceptions of key personnel in non-university, post-secondary institutions. This examination tried to understand how institutions are looking at ways of providing appropriate education for the future, where the needs of the economy, and those who are being prepared for work within it, may be very different from today.

Whilst there has always been industrial change occurring, leading to technological displacement, vocational institutions had, until recently, a well defined place in the industrial environment. These institutions trained young people in skills, and conditioned them to the values of occupations, demanded by a particular industrial culture. The ensuing jobs provided a clear sense of occupational identity, and reasonable financial rewards, in comparison with those who lived the life of unskilled or semi-skilled labourers.

Whilst the jobs acquired after training did not always last for life, the skill learned, was frequently easily

transferable from one employment situation to another. Recent rapid advances in technology have led to a situation in which not only has the substitution of machines led to a decrease in demand for workers, but also an increasingly rapid obsolescence of learned vocational skills, often occurring soon after entry into the work force. In the past, technical and vocational education was designed in order to make the worker more proficient in a particular area, in order that the employee might become a more productive member of an enterprise. The person with a shovel digging a trench with a group of fellow workers, and the operator of a modern dragline, were in essence workers carrying out the same task, albeit the latter with a more sophisticated tool. In both cases the worker required skill and judgement to carry out the job, it was the productivity of the digging instrument which determined how much work could be performed. What has changed and is continuing to evolve is a situation where machinery is frequently guided by numerical control in much the same way as a player-piano is actuated. [7]

In addition, other jobs have disappeared through employers relocating to parts of the world where labour conditions are less stringent and wage rates more depressed. Many jobs in industry have vanished as a result, as manufacturers replace skilled craftsmen by machinery automatically driven by a predetermined programme. The

industries which remain adapting to new industrial processes, require workers of higher educational standard, though in fewer numbers, to programme and service self-regulating industrial practices. Vocational education is thus faced with a very different labour market today for the students whom it qualifies. In the past, the credentials awarded provided an entry to potential life employment, today the situation is different.

Qualifications obtained provide, at best, a lottery ticket for contesting in the labour market, for a temporary place as an employee, until such time as skills become obsolete or are updated. At worst, qualifications prove inappropriate for the jobs which are available in the field in which the student has studied. These qualifications frequently then become a sifting tool for employers in other fields, to separate a multitude of applicants into a manageable short list of potential employees.

What then is the place of the present day technical institutions? Is it to condition the young to a particular occupational identity which will soon become obsolete? This conditioning will probably prove disadvantageous to the continual readjustment and retraining which the individual may need to undergo in order to adapt to changing labour market conditions. Education and vocational training may in future be required to develop means, whereby people are prepared for gaps in employment and to provide retraining

for new techniques or possibly different skills.

The stigma of job loss and the accompanying erosion of self image is evident in the response of many in present mixed economy societies. Yet this withdrawal from participation and sense of shame is a learned reaction rather than something inherent in the human condition. Should institutions be actively seeking to counter this response to occupational loss in those whom it educates, and if so, what are the implications for labour tractability in tomorrow's student?

As stated earlier in this article, three institutions were examined, one each in the United Kingdom, Canada and United States of America. All were located in medium size towns, all communities having experienced some degree of de-industrialization.

The three countries have been chosen, for, despite differences in history, economic development, and present cultural climate, there seem perhaps to be certain similarities.

All have a concern with the number of young people entering the labour market, that the young will have appropriate education and skills.

In North America, as in Britain, there has been some expression of dissatisfaction between what is taught in educational settings and what some sections of the community, particularly future employers, feel is necessary

if the student is to be immediately productive upon obtaining employment. [8 & 9]

This dissatisfaction is often focused around whether the institutions should be more or less vocationally oriented, in order to prepare students for the realities of the work world. This discussion is frequently presented as if it is a new dilemma facing vocational education in a time of revolutionary change in the industrial environment. [10]

Moore examined and questions the assumption in the United Kingdom that "educational practices develop skills or attitudes and values that are appropriate to corresponding sectors of the occupational structures." [11] Nevertheless, the belief that there is a casual link between appropriate educational forms and finding a niche in the labour market is one that seems to be widely held by a variety of groups mentioned in his paper.

In contrast, Munroe discussing the objectives of American community colleges lists twelve functions. High on this list is occupational training:

> More and more, the community college is becoming the educational agency which trains persons for entry into an ever widening number of skilled jobs - jobs which are requiring increasingly sophisticated technical knowledge. [12]

Kidd, in a speech at a conference on "The Community College in Canada, Present Status/Future Prospects". described the Ontario colleges of applied arts and

technology as having the following features:

> Certain characteristics seem to be common, although the mix may be quite varied: vocational, technical and paraprofessional programs, from one to three years in length, preparing students for employment and providing retraining and upgrading of others. [13]

In all of these descriptions there is implied, a value held by many, in all three countries, that there is, or at least should be, a relationship between vocational education and the subsequent activity of the student on a related occupation in the labour market.

This discussion of the relative merits of education in its wider sense, in which the student is expected to master the process of analysis and synthesis, leading to an ability to problem-solve, versus specific training in a particular skill, is not new. Two British researchers, examining the Department of Liberal Studies at "Western" college in the United Kingdom, stated:

> The idea of liberalizing the technical curriculum, however, was far from newly conceived, indeed the idea is a continuation of two late nineteenth century movements. The first of them stems from the efforts of Owenite Socialists to reform society. The second has its roots in Fabian idealism, and stems largely from the tradition of John Stuart Mill. [14]

Vision 2000 recognized this necessity to avoid over specificity in recommending there should be a significant increase in the generic skills and general education content of programs leading to a college credential to ensure an equivalence of learning outcomes between these components

and specific occupational skills. [15] It suggests:

> The focus on general education and generic skills will involve a fundamental reorientation of college curricula. To achieve our goals will require that college educators, both faculty, staff and administrators, undertake a major process of renewal of curriculum and delivery methods at each college. The process will need to be guided by the establishment, on a system-wide basis, of clear learning outcomes for each program leading to college credentials. In providing for such outcomes, we envision considerable diversity across the system in the organization and delivery of general education, generic skills and job-specific skills. [16]

The arguments of education versus training in order to prepare people for the world of work, have been overtaken by the problem of the oversupply of youthful labour in many industrial countries. Gleeson, discussing the British experience of Further Education in the 1980s argues that:

> ...the mass extension of further education is seen to have less to do with equipping labour with specific technical skills to make it more employable, and more to do with establishing replacement criteria...for regulating the growing queue of young unemployed people awaiting entry into a contracting job market. [17]

As much Further Education in Britain has been traditionally related to the training of apprentices, the collapse of apprenticeship programmes has had a major effect upon the colleges of further education. Apprenticeships in 1983 were only 34% of what they were twenty years earlier, only 15,000 being taken on in that year. [18]

Similarly, unemployment amongst youth in Canada has risen from 8.8% in 1965 to 18.8% in 1985 in the 15 - 19 year

old age group. [19]

In the United States, youth employment opportunities have also declined in the last decade and it would appear that the pattern in Britain is similar to the other two countries in which this study was carried out. There has, however, been a more vigorous growth in North America of the service sector of the economy.

A brief description of the communities in which the studies took place will now be given, in order that the context of this examination may be set.

'Simonsborough', Canada

The city of 'Simonsborough' is a regional service centre with a population of 61,000 (1986). It is located in the Great Lakes Industrial Basin within 125 miles of two cities of over a million people, Toronto, and Buffalo in the United States of America. 'Simonsborough' is also an industrial centre, a heavy electrical engineering plant was opened in 1890 and to this day it remains the city's largest employer with 2,200 employees (1987). The city has declined as a manufacturing centre: in 1941, 54% of the work force was engaged in manufacturing, by 1981 this had declined to 29%. [20] Education is a major service provided within the city, both at the university level, and the "Van Horne" College of Applied Arts and Technology founded in the 1960s, the college having a full time student population of

approximately 3,000. There were 93 full time students at Van Horne College in the second year of the two year Business Programme when this study was carried out. The unemployment rate for the region, which approximately corresponds to a United Kingdom travel-to-work area, was 6.08% (September 1986). [21] As of March 1991, the unemployment rate is 16.1%.

'Driftsburgh', Massachusetts, U.S.A.

The town of 'Driftsburgh' is also a regional service centre with a population of 55,000 (1983). [22] It is located in the Berkshire Hills in the western part of the State of Massachusetts. Both New York City and Boston lie within 100 to 200 miles of 'Driftsburgh'. The town also has a major industrial element dominated by a large electrical engineering plant which employed 7,700 in 1986. During 1987, this company will make 1,300 people redundant. In comparison, in 1943, the company employed 13,645 people. [23] In an essay on the implications for Western Massachusetts, Gordon and Sherman stated that the post-World War II bargain of continuous growth, between management and labour has broken down. This bargain "provided growing profits, growing wages and investment in plant and equipment", this breakdown has "devastated America's industrial heartland" and is now affecting "so-called miracle economies such as Massachusetts". [24] Education is a service provided in the

town. 'Wiltshire' County Community College has approximately 2,500 full time students. There were 123 full time students enrolled in the second year of the two year Business Programme when this study was carried out. The unemployment rate in 'Driftsburgh' labour market areas was 4.7% (January, 1987). With the lay-offs envisaged at the electric plant this is expected to rise to 6.0% by December 1987. As of April, 1991, the unemployment rate is 11.9%.

'Roberton', England

The town of 'Roberton' is a manufacturing town of 98,000 in the North of England which also acts as a regional service centre. It is located approximately 250 miles from London and 140 miles from Edinburgh. Its prominence as a manufacturing town developed in the 18th century, when it developed as a textile centre; however in the 19th century, manufacturing developed around the railway industry which came to dominate the town economy. Today, it is still a manufacturing centre having diversified before and further, since the closing of a major railway works. Manufacturing in 'Roberton' as in 'Simonsborough' and 'Driftsburgh' no longer dominates the economy. 'Roberton' College of Technology was founded in 1892 in order to provide vocational training for workers in the town's industry. Today, it has approximately 3,000 full and part time students. There were 22 full time students enrolled in the

second year of the full time business programme at the time the survey was carried out. The small number of full time students at 'Roberton' College in comparison with 'Wiltshire' and 'Van Horne' Colleges is a reflection of the different training pattern in Britain where day release practices still dominates vocational education. The unemployment rate in 'Roberton' is 12.9% (June, 1987), [25] and for the travel to work district, it is 15.9% (June, 1987). [26] Today it stands at 7.9% for the travel to work district and 9% in 'Roberton'.

The colleges in the three towns being considered are all functioning in economic environments which they were and, to a degree, remain engineering and manufacturing centers. In all three communities, the colleges examined, were closely allied with the manufacturing sector. All three colleges are faced with the need to examine their educational function in relation to the changed economic environment which their students must face. The colleges examined can, therefore, be seen as typical of the general situation outlined earlier.

The faculty, students and administration, were interviewed on a non random qualitative basis, in order that thememtic trends might be established. The purpose of the study was the generation of ideas rather than hypothesis testing, and my tentative concepts should be considered in this context. As I am a business teacher, my interviews

were confined to business students.

Similarities and Differences Between the Institutions Examined

Students

The majority of students in all three countries had made a conscious choice of business education seeing it as having direct relevance to their life goals. Their expectations of employment, were apparently realistic in relation to their training, and the majority aimed at employment in the service sector of the economy. A minority, but nevertheless a considerable one, in each country, wished for an expansion of work placement opportunity, expressing dissatisfaction at the lack of integration between their education and the work place.

The greatest difference between the student responses in the three countries, lay in the area of the type of employment preferred upon qualification. The U. K. students showed a preference for employment in large organizations (over 200 employees), whilst the American, and a sizeable minority of Canadian students, showed a preference, for small companies, or for working as individual entrepreneurs.

Faculty

Faculty in all three countries reflected two main themes in their responses. These themes were the necessity

of helping student develop as people, which went considerably beyond vocational training, and the necessity for ensuring their offerings were relevant to available employment opportunities. Some ambivalence was shown to the question of education for the broader aspects of citizenship, varying from rejection of this role for college teachers by one Canadian respondent, to avoidance by one of the American faculty who was interviewed. Only in the U.K. was the response reflective of an institutional policy, though what form citizenship training took was not made clear.

Administrators

The general view of educational administrators was similar in all three countries. They, like faculty, saw their task as providing an education climate, in which students could develop as people and citizens, as well as acquiring specific work skills. The Administrators seemed mixed in their response to the external environment, particularly the place of small business as a future employer. There was little evidence of planning or a large scale formal institutional examination, as opposed to small programme developments to this question.

The subjective impression gained of many ,but not all administrators, was pressured by fiscal concerns, anxious to "trim fat" but who felt it was incumbent upon them to answer

my questions in a positive manner. While there was considerable relating of curriculum review and planning activity, this was related more to fiscal pressures, than the educational demands of the external environment. Citizenship in the broader sense of community, collectivity and concern for others was loosely assumed to be consonant with corporate socialization. Corporate vocational needs seemed to dominate much of their thinking.

Similarly, whilst all administrators subscribed to the concept of citizenship training, there was little to suggest from their answers, that the possible difference between corporate socialization and general citizenship education had been examined, in the same depth as vocational aspects of the curriculum.

Presidents and Principal

The main difference apparent in the responses of chief executive officers, was the more vocational emphasis in the U.K.. and Canadian responses, in comparison with the American President. This possibly reflected the slightly different emphasis of 'Wiltshire' college, in that, as a transfer institution for many students to the university system, the college emphasis was rather more broadly conceived, than institutions which had been deliberately founded to serve the economic needs of their communities. All three chief executive officers felt some pressure from

the external environment to serve a number of competing constituencies; student expectations, local business interests, and the wider economic needs of the countries within which the colleges were located.

Nevertheless, the apparent lack of awareness of environmental factors in many of their subordinates, may make this apparent consciousness something which is not acted upon when essential policy decisions must be made.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study was undertaken to examine the direction which might be taken in non-university, post-secondary education in three post-industrial societies. It was designed in order to try and tease out some perspective by which institutions might begin to measure, what contribution they were making to societies, within which they were located.

In a liberal democracy, it is not always clear which particular group an institution is designed to serve. The case of non-university, post-secondary education immediately raises the question, is the institution in which education takes place designed to serve local community, the wider society, the future employer of students, or the needs of the students whom it enrolls? Within a corporatist society, this question would not arise, but in a pluralist democracy, debate among four constituencies, is ongoing and frequently

acerbic.

Changes in direction which institutions take, will frequently reflect, which particular section of the constituency is in ascendency at a moment in time. This in turn, will often reflect the primary concerns of society as a whole, rather than a particular current educational norm.

It is therefore, not surprising that in three countries, which have moved from a period of post-war prosperity in the manufacturing sector, toward a service dominated economic environment, institutions whose role has been to train for employment, as well as educate for general citizenship, should find their function coming under scrutiny.

These dilemmas are reflected in the answers to the questions posed by the writer in all three countries, and by all members of the constituencies of the colleges, students, administrators, teachers, and Chief Executive officers. It is within the context of change, within a pluralist democratic framework, that the discussion of the respondents' views will take place.

Changes of emphasis and direction taking place in the three colleges

Changes in direction, are perhaps best divided into two categories. First are the instrumental changes which reflect the changing technology of the work environment,

computer literacy is one example of this, being seen as a necessity for those who enter the business world of today, in all three countries. Changes which are essentially practical are to be seen in all three countries, reflecting the requirements of the labour market, as well as the wishes of students, to be able to compete for a place within the work place. Practical changes, of which computer literacy is an example, are on the whole accepted by the majority of college constituencies, in all three countries, and seen as having utility in college education.

More controversial are those changes, or in many cases increased specificity of emphasis, upon such subjects as human relations in the work place, increased communication skills, and the mixture of values, ideological beliefs and dogmas subsumed under the title of citizenship. The lack of definition of citizenship would perhaps account for this conflict. Few would disagree with the view that getting along well with fellow workers is pleasanter than earning one's living in a climate of social conflict. Broadfoot, in examining the growth of corporate management in education in England and France, and the variety of norms which education is required to serve, speaks of the confusion facing teachers in reaching a particular educational philosophical position in relation to the functions which are required of them.

> Structural and economic tensions in society confront schools with quite incompatible demands - to integrate and to select; to teach creativity and conformity; to be vocationally oriented in an era of mass youth unemployment. Thirdly, this lack of certainty present teachers themselves with something of an identity crisis about the scope of their professional responsibilities and their educational objectives. [27]

This dilemma is apparent in the responses of teachers in the countries examined. In answer to the question:

> Q. What is the most important thing which your college can give those who come here apart from the qualification for which they are studying?
>
> A. Flexibility of response to the demands of the job, personal development, the ability to cope with society,...to have ideals and self confidence, to be prepared to train and retrain, (U.K. lecturer)
>
> A. ...The student lives in a dynamic world, the skills they learn now may be obsolete in a few years. The students often believe in black and white and say "You just give me the skills and I will be enployable". This is one of my frustrations. (U. S. Professor)

The role conflict was expressed in answer to a variety of questions given to faculty in all three countries. This sense of role conflict was combined with a sense of loss of professional status, in which decision making was becoming more centralized, the teachers increasingly having to function, according to an externally imposed criteria, rather than their own professional judgement.

The administrators in all three countries saw their tasks rather more clearly than members of faculty, defining the college's role with considerably less hesitancy than

their subordinates. Many administrative ideas, clearly sincerely held and freely expressed, would suggest considerable potential for conflict on the part of subordinates, in trying to operationalize these often worthwhile goals.

Lander, in discussing the role of the Business Educational Council in U.K. business training, suggested that those sympathetic with the BEC approach would gain more autonomy than those who obviously opposed their goals. She suggested that this approach will "however disguised" be based on the value of "capital accumulation" which will determine the correct course to take.

> This it may be argued is what one would expect a business education to do. However, what is of interest here is change in the way these ideas are being transmitted. The change in the way educational knowledge is transmitted and organized should not be seen merely as a change in pedagogic style. [28]

This description of the BEC approach would seem to be reflected in the views of the many administrators, in that the faculty will provide a model of personal development for the student in which subordination of personal loyalties to the need of the wider group becomes the paramount ideology of the educational enterprise. A more clear understanding of the dilemma was given in the answer of a U.S. administrator who stated that there was a need to help students in a redefinition of their identity, seeing them

caught between their immediate need for jobs and a long range need for education in life.

One area of change which all three colleges were attempting to contend with, was the way in which citizenship education was integrated with training for the work place. There was clearly conflict in this area between faculty and administrators. Some faculty members were attempting to deal with this, some avoided the issue by denial or withdrawal, the Administrators and Presidents and Principal varying from optimism to pessimism.

> Our outlook is optimistic we are training for business...
>
> The general studies elective is where this takes place. Organizational Behaviour should teach people how to be corporate citizens.
>
> Informally, we have looked at this but in a formal sense we have done very little
>
> We are doing a really poor job...Our students are fragile and isolated and the outside world is dangerous...

Handy, a business educator in Britain, in discussing principles which might be considered in educating for tomorrow, suggests multi-dimensional learning, with success being measured on a variety of scales. "Capability, creativity and community are at least as important as culture and comprehension". [29]

It would appear that while the three institutions have recognized the need for emphasis upon citizen training, as

yet the degree of emphasis upon curriculum planning has not been given, that emphasis placed on vocational subjects. McGivney's focus in discussing education for the unemployed, and whether it should be instrumental or expressive quotes a tutor:

> In a period of rapid technical and economic change, people need a broad educational base. There is little point in training people to fit particular jobs as jobs change more rapidly than training. [30]

There has been little formal response to the widely held view in the colleges, in all three countries, that small businesses and/or self employment, will be an important feature of the economic environment in all three societies, as a way of providing employment. Individual courses have been started for small business proprietors in certain colleges, but with the exception of the tourism lecturer in Canada, the emphasis was still on the large macro business enterprise. In the fall of 1991 the Canadian College will start a one year certificate program in entrepreneurship. This, however, does not mean no consideration has been given, rather it suggests an informal ad hoc response to a perceived need, rather than an institutional focus upon a change in the environment.

I have concentrated to this time on those who provide education services to students. I have tried to show the dilemmas facing those who must provide education in an

environment, which makes a variety of demands, upon the institutions in the three countries examined. How are these changes in emphasis seen by the students, and how nearly are the educational offerings meeting their needs, as the students perceive them? Whatever the view of administrators and faculty, and those who design curriculum within centralized government bodies, students will enter a programme with a wide variety of expectations.

These expectations will vary from students who have already made a definite career commitment, those students who seek an educational experience with a certain emphasis, to those who enter a course having failed to obtain, for a variety of reasons, the training of their choice. The heterogeneity of these expectations will affect perception of the offerings of the institutions, suggesting that a degree of flexibility in courses is necessary in order to gain maximum student acceptance. These three views, those who had made a choice, those seeking an educational experience with a particular emphasis and those who's choice represented a last resort to education were represented in the students, interviewed in all three countries. The Canadian and American student group, were older than the U.K. students. Many of the former had previous work experience prior to entering full time college education.

The majority of students had realistic expectations of their employment capabilities, in relation to the education

which they were receiving in all three countries. In Canada and the U.S.A. a sizeable minority expected to continue their education. Student acceptance of the liberal component of their education was higher in Canada than in either U.S.A. or Britain. This was somewhat surprising, as, the American college was more oriented toward general education, than either the British Technical College, or the Canadian College of Applied Arts and Technology. The Canadian College had, in the last three years, prior to this study, undergone a detailed curriculum review, in relation to the general education component of its curriculum. This review had focused upon making this component relevant to the type of student in each programme, and appears to have been successful.

In all three countries, students expressed a desire for more work-related experience, in order to understand better, the job market, within which they must compete. This perhaps poses a dilemma for the colleges, for, if the purpose of the educational environment is to provide a mechanism for regulating the entry of candidates to the labour market, the provision of work opportunity may provide problems for employers, unions, and faculty, who must arrange suitable work experience.

The majority of U.S. students, and a sizeable minority of Canadians, in contrast to the British students, wished to work for themselves, or an employer with less than 200

employees. This response would suggest that colleges might care to focus upon how best these students' aspirations might be met. No British student wished to work for themselves, the majority wishing to work for large organizations. This may reflect the employment pattern inthe past in the town where the British college was located, nevertheless, the future pattern of employment suggested in Northern England, might make this view one which the college might wish to review. In all three countries, the student outlook was generally one of the instrumentality of their training in relation to their chances of obtaining a place in the labour market. This focus on the job market was present to some degree in the faculty, whilst the administration and chief executive officers, though concerned with employment, tended to take a broader view, of the external environment.

The students generally seemed to be reasonably satisfied, and have fewer fundamental questions concerning their college experience, and the emphasis of the curriculum, than many administrators, faculty and chief executive officers. Most students assume that if the college obtained the correct formula between education and training, there would be an opportunity for them within the labour market. There are exceptions who see the supply of jobs in relation to numbers competing, as having an effect upon future employability, thought the question of job

supply rarely was raised in their responses.

Perhaps the best any institution can achieve, is to give students certain concrete skills, literacy, numeracy, self-confidence, and enquiring minds, coupled with some vocational training, in the hope, that this will allow them to be trainable in whatever position they eventually obtain. The ability to obtain information in order to acquire a skill which is relevant to solving a problem, is perhaps as important in coping with any job, as an assumption that the acquisition of technical expertise in an area, will be relevant to the multitude of activities one is called upon to do, in all but the most routine of occupations. Nevertheless, employers and professional organizations, continue to demand a great number of specific skills. Many students sense that the relevance of what they are currently doing may be short term in its utility.

The question which may be asked of the institutions in the three countries, is are they at this time using their power as a social resource to best meet their societies' needs? It is unlikely, in more than a general sense that institutions can meet the needs of employers for skilled labour, given the lack of homogeneity in the skills required for the multiplicity of tasks in a service economy. A certain circumspection in stating this reality, is perhaps in order, as the bald statement by vocational educational

institutions that lack of jobs is a major reason for unemployment in post-industrial economies, will likely lead to destructive conflict, rather than modification of the goals of the colleges as labour providers.

That the colleges will continue to provide training for many employers, should, and will no doubt continue. **Whether this should remain their primary role**, is the question which should be asked in examining their future goals? The ability to understand the society in which the student must function upon qualification from college, to be able to make informed choices concerning the direction of one's life, in order that a personally meaningful social role may be acquired, is of enormous importance to people in democracies. This capacity is helped by appropriate education. However, this capacity may be hindered or shriveled by over-specific inappropriate training. Faculty, administrators and chief executive officers all appear to realize this to some degree, as do some students, however the external environment frequently appears to hold differing values. In his annual report, the Ontario Commissioner for Youth, Ken Dryden, in discussing youth unemployment stated:

> I have found unemployment to be an elusive problem. It is from one standpoint an individual problem born of inadequate education, training and skills, of unrealistic expectations and attitudes to work... [31]

In the whole introduction the lack of jobs in the economy is never mentioned despite in 1985 unemployment among the young 15 - 19 age band being 15.8% and in the 20 - 24 age band 11.6%, the Ontario provincial average at that time being 8%. [32] This conservatism is reflected in the view of the U.S. President.

"Conservatism today is demanding very ideological factors be faced in education. Perhaps by accident some good will come of this." The Canadian President's understanding of the situation his college faces was expressed as follows:

> ...We must invest more resources in training...Our mission is to provide for companies, large, medium and small, to provide employers with more and more well trained, positively motivated graduates...Our survival is going to be in partnership with the private sector, joint training and development not just advisory committees.

This view of the college role, as one serving the business community, is similar to that expressed by Cyril Taylor writing of the role of the new City of Colleges of Technology in Britain:

> Old-fashioned educationalists with their roots in the Sixties sometimes criticize technical education, claiming it does not educate children. They are wrong, for older pupils, courses in statistics, automation...even hotel management, marketing and retailing not only help them to learn marketable skills, but encourage them to think clearly and solve problems. [33]

In all three countries enormous pressures are upon vocational education to move in the same direction and

provide training for what are seen as the vocational needs of the economy. There is, it appears, an assumption that the correct educational curriculum will lead to jobs in the future for those qualifying from the institutions.

The arguments may be fallacious, for to argue that unemployment is primarily due to the lack of appropriate skills in the workforce, is to assume that there is an ever increasing demand for goods and services which will absorb surplus labour. This is not the time to critique "human capital investment" assumptions, yet a cursory glance at employment and education after high school in a variety of countries should raise many questions concerning the simple relationship between higher education - productivity - and employment. Certain skills will no doubt lead to employment for those fortunate enough to possess the, however, the demand for computer programmers will, like coalminers or engineers, eventually reach a saturation point. A broad education upon which skills can be built will probably give students the best chance of adapting to the labour market of tomorrow. To attempt to match training with demand for skills, without a large, possibly dominant, general educational component will probably continue to train people with inflexible occupational identities, who will have difficulty in adapting to a fast changing economic environment.

Variation in Patterns of Education Between the Three Colleges

Watts in discussing education and employment in Britain describes four main relationships tying education and employment to one another.

Selection: educational attainment used by an employer to choose members of the labour force.

Socialization: the influencing of outlook of those in an education process toward on appropriate for the role they will fulfill.

Orientation: the use of particular curriculum to prepare people for the employment that will follow.

Preparation: the learning of knowledge and skill with direct applicability to the world of work. [34]

This framework was used to examine, briefly, the similarities and differences among the colleges in the three countries.

Selection

All three colleges provide a formal qualification, upon completing the prescribed course of work set down by their regulations. This provides employers, and educational institutions to which a student may subsequently proceed, with a framework of a prescribed curriculum which the student has followed. 'Wiltshire' College and 'Van Horne' College work upon the 'credit' system which is generally

used in North America within further and higher education. The purpose of the credit system is to provide, both transferability of learning between institutions, and some flexibility of choice for the student, in the emphasis students wish to place in their own education. In practice the students in business studies at 'Wiltshire' College, and 'Van Horne' College, have the majority of time allotted to vocationally oriented courses, as have the students in 'Roberton' College. The North American practice of breaking learning into its component parts, gives an impression of much heavier student loadings in North America, than in the United Kingdom. It is impossible to say whether this is true, however, the writer has examined examples of final year work in 'Roberton' College, and the standard achieved appeared as high, or higher, than in the college in Canada where he is employed.

Jackson relates how a Canadian Administrator told her "we are implementing a method...for assuring that the institution meets those [externally defined] objectives...its a major shift in direction for the institution...because in the past the faculty have been responsible for definition of program content and outcome. You cannot have that - you cannot put wolves in charge of the chicken coup, lets face it." [35]

In Britain the B tech central body already drives curriculum. I feel it is silly as well as offensive to see

faculty as helots suggested by the Canadian Administration quoted by Jackson. The contempt this would have earned in the view of Adam Smith, the father of advanced capitalism, may be seen as follows:

> Among men,{sic}...the most dissimilar geniuses are of use to one another the different produces of their respective talents,...being brought into a common stock, where every man may purchase whatever part of the produce of the other mans talents he has occasion for. [36]

The B Tech National Certificate in Business, and Diploma in Business Sales and Merchandising appear, more specifically vocationally oriented than the Associate in Arts degree. 'Wiltshire' College in the U. S. A., is possibly less vocationally oriented, in contrast to 'Van Horne' College in Canada, or 'Roberton' College in the U. K. 'Wiltshire' College is designed as a preparatory institution for university, for those students "graduating" with high marks, this, perhaps partially explains, 'Wiltshire's' less vocationally specific curriculum.

Orientation

The orientation function appears to be present within the calendar descriptions of both 'Roberton' college in the U. K. and 'Van Horne' College in Canada. A less specific orientation and greater generality of curriculum is present in the courses offered at 'Wiltshire' College. This, again, is possibly explained by the dual purpose of the

institution, in that 'Wiltshire' provides both transfer education to university, as well as vocational training for employment.

Socialization

It is more difficult to obtain data upon the process of socialization toward work occurring in the three colleges. The emphasis upon Organizational Behaviour and Communication would suggest this socialization process in the curriculum of 'Van Horne' College. In a similar way, 'People in Organizations', and the course on "The organization and Its Environment' would suggest the same of 'Roberton' College. A more subjective impression might be gained by the interaction observed between students, and lecturers, by the writer. A certain friendly no-nonsense climate, appeared to describe the interaction between students and teachers, in 'Van Horne' College and 'Roberton' College, which gave an impression of the relationship between a "progressive" supervisor and subordinates. The climate of 'Wiltshire' College appeared more subtly complex. Students who were not interested in my research, clearly showed this by a look of boredom, and withdrawal, some leaving before th group session was complete. The majority of students, nevertheless, showed considerable interest, remaining after the session to ask questions, comment on the research, and express both positive and negative comments about their

institution, what I was examining, and their educational experiences. The climate appeared to be more open and interactive between lecturer, students and researcher, than in the other two institutions. The high number of students at 'Wiltshire' College interested in working for themselves or for small companies, in conjunction with the previous observation, may suggest that a less structured vocational curriculum with a more open atmosphere, may produce the flexibility which all colleges seek to impart. The greater the maturity in age of the American students possibly also played a part in this, nevertheless, 'Wiltshire' College was the institution, in which education for the world of business as opposed to vocational training for a business job, was the predominant ethos observed.

Preparation

Preparation for the world of business was most strongly emphasized at 'Van Horne" College in Canada. Field Integration seminars, and a one day a week placement in the second year of the programme were an integral portion of the curriculum. The lecturers were proud of this achievement, and field placement was popular with the students. Frequently field placement led to the offer of a permanent position upon qualification, and it was clear teachers made a great deal of effort to match individual students with potential employers. I observed employers speaking

approvingly of field placement programmes, in which they have stated that placement allows them to examine the performance of potential job applicant, prior to the offer of a job. In both 'Roberton' College and 'Wiltshire' College, many students expressed a wish for field experience. Field experience appears to provide an opportunity to test whether a student's choice of career is appropriate, as well as an opportunity for an employer to see whether a particular student will fit into their organization. The student and potential employer both gained experience of one another.

Conclusion

The three college examined were all involved primarily in preparing students for employment in the labour market, within the countries in which they were located. The view that college education, in each country was primarily producing labour for the market place appeared to be true. The breadth of education in all three colleges, seemed wider than the beginning job requirements of most occupations the students intended entering. The majority of students in all three countries appeared to have identified with the values of the occupations which they would eventually enter. Most of the students who filled in questionnaires in all three colleges seemed satisfied with their educational experience, the relationships they had made with their peers and faculty

and showed guarded optimism about their future.

Faculty in the three colleges showed some role conflict in their perception of their task, in that a number experienced conflict attempting to educate in a flexible manner for a changing world, while at the same time socializing students to accept future allocated work roles. An impressionistic view was that at some degree of personal emotional cost, the majority of faculty interviewed were doing a good job as seen by the students they taught. The faculty view of their role tended to be rather narrow and specific in relation to their subject, making them less likely than administrators, to examine the issues of the broader social environment, in which their students eventually would function.

Most administrators in all three countries were aware of the wider economic and social issues, though in 'Wiltshire' College and 'Roberton' College, administration had developed few formal plans to help the faculty address these issues. In all three colleges, there was evidence in administrators' replies, that they were insufficiently aware of the role conflicts which faculty faced, in changes which were occurring, leading to a multiplicity of role demands.

The Principal and Presidents all possessed the broadest vision of the role of the college, and were aware of the difficulty of balancing their college's direction, in institutions, seen as having a training role for labour, but

which should also be contributing to the wider society by educating future citizens. It would appear the business community in all three countries will remain for the foreseeable future, major employers of the three colleges' students.

The general education component of vocational training is under attack in all three countries at the present time, except where general education specifically appears to contribute to socialization of future employees. Without education, which helps an individual examine the society in which he or she lives, a citizen lacks the many skills to help the process of making informed choices. In a society in which for many retraining and continued education will be necessary, a sound educational base, in which the ability to examine ideas, and make informed judgements on courses of action, will be of considerable value to citizens. The danger at the present time appears to lie not so much in the deletion of the educational component from vocational education, but in the educational component becoming a subtle form of ideological brainwashing reflecting the values of a particular constituent of society. A perhaps extreme, but increasingly held view is expressed by Muller, a Canadian academic who, in describing the Canadian Colleges asserts:

> Colleges are not independent institutions. They are fundamental to the everyday operations of "the Canadian state". Governments create these

> educational institutions via legislation (Dennison and Gallagher, 1986:515). This legislation (and Government policy) mandates college managers to organize and re-organize these institutions as they see fit - from programs and curriculum to staffing. In addition, state authorities fund colleges ,programs, courses, instructors, managers, support staff, students, buildings, equipment, etc. Colleges are part of the daily operations of various levels of Canada's state formation: they are ruled politically and economically by state authorities (Gaskell and McLaren, 1987; Wotherspoon, 1987) [37]

Colleges are a social resource, and in all three countries, still retain some freedom of choice in the way they choose to educate.

Vocational education remains todays, as in the past, an experience in the fine art of balancing the requirement of a variety of constituencies. To assume that colleges are powerless to contribute to maintaining the balance, when it becomes weighted in a particular direction, is to turn away from the admonition; 'Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's'. [38]

The act of maintaining a balance between the vocational and educational component in technical institutions today is difficult, requiring of faculty and administrators, vision, political realism, moral integrity and energy. The nature of the changing employment market, and the heterogeneous demands of employers, raise difficulties for those engaged in the profession of education. These dilemmas are very real, yet, are not amenable to simple, mutually agreed

solutions. The present ascendency of emphasis on the needs of the employer, who requires a multiplicity of specific skills, may all too easily cause educationalists to forget the need of students to be educated in skills which allow them to evaluate, and choose, in an uncertain world. Without an educated mass population, a country's citizens in times of uncertainty, may fall prey to those populist figures who offer simplistic solutions to complex dilemmas facing all post-industrial societies.

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